SUPPORTING IMMIGRANTS AND IMMIGRATION TO ALBERTA

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I. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to outline a strategic framework that will lead to a more coordinated Alberta government policy and program approach to immigrants and immigration.

This framework is essential to address the needs of Alberta's immigrant population, as well as Alberta's need for an adequate supply of people with the right knowledge and skills to meet the demands of our prosperous and growing economy.

The Government of Alberta has adopted three basic strategies to address the skills shortage issue:

1. Increase the skill and knowledge levels of Albertans.
2. Facilitate the mobility of labour in Canada.
3. Increase the number of immigrants to Alberta.

In this document, the word ***immigrant*** refers to individuals who are legally entitled to enter and remain permanently in Canada, and therefore may meet the requirements to apply for Canadian Citizenship. This policy framework does not address temporary foreign workers, who temporarily work in Alberta under the federal Temporary Foreign Worker Program.

This policy framework focuses on the third strategy, by developing a more coordinated Alberta government policy and program approach to immigrants and immigration.

This framework does not include specific funding requests at this time. These will come through future departmental business planning/budgeting processes in support of the policy framework.

Vision of immigration to Alberta

The Government of Alberta is committed to realizing the following vision:

- Immigrants and their families choose to live in Alberta, where they are able to fully participate in community life and valued for their cultural, economic and social contributions.

Guiding principles for immigration to Alberta

In making this vision a reality, the Government of Alberta will be guided by the following principles:

- *Community-Based, Alberta Approach.* Each community has unique needs. The Government of Alberta will work with community stakeholders as they explore immigration as a possible method to build and sustain their communities.
- *Collaborative.* Given the wide variety of interests affected by immigration matters, the Government of Alberta is committed to work with partners, such as the federal government, municipal governments, employers, settlement service providers, immigrant advocacy groups, regulatory bodies and professional associations, post-secondary institutions, health service providers, labour organizations, employment service providers, and religious, ethnic and voluntary community service groups.
- *Fair and Inclusive.* Inclusiveness means more than being friendly or hospitable. It means providing access to employment opportunities and removing barriers to immigrants' full participation as equal citizens in all aspects of community life.

- *Holistic.* Immigrants are valued for more than just their economic contributions. A holistic approach is required, which addresses the needs of the entire family and recognizes the contributions immigrants make to Alberta's social and cultural life.
- *Sustainable.* Immigrants are valued for their long-term contributions. The investment we make in education, language training and settlement services today not only supports the contributions of immigrants, but also their children, grandchildren and future generations.
- *Accountable.* We are committed to the effective and efficient use of resources to achieve the objectives of this strategy. We also commit to reporting on progress. To that end, the Government of Alberta will release an annual accountability report on this strategy.

The Province's role in immigration

Under the Canadian constitution, immigration is an area of concurrent federal and provincial jurisdiction. The federal government has exclusive responsibility for determining who is admitted and the overall number of immigrants coming to Canada, as well as supporting government-sponsored refugees during their first year after arrival.

Alberta shares responsibility with the federal government for the settlement and integration of immigrants after they arrive in Alberta. When new Canadians arrive in Alberta, a number of Government of Alberta departments[1] work in partnership with municipalities and community organizations to ensure services are available. Services of particular importance to immigrants include credential/skills recognition, language training, and settlement services.

In addition, all Albertans play important roles in making Alberta a welcoming and successful home for newcomers of all cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Policy direction

The implementation of this strategy will focus on the following four key strategic directions:

1. *Welcoming communities.* Support communities as they work towards achieving their goals for welcoming and being inclusive of immigrants and their families.
2. *Attracting immigrants to Alberta.* Increase the number of immigrants accepted to Canada who choose to live in Alberta.
3. *Living in Alberta.* Expand the programs and services that integrate immigrants and their families into daily life, so they can successfully live, work and learn in Alberta.
4. *Working in Alberta.* Help immigrants access labour market opportunities.

II. Trends in Immigration to Alberta[2]

15% of Albertans were born outside Canada[i] (see endnotes)

Throughout our history, immigrants have come to Alberta, established themselves and been joined by other members of their families. That process has brought us energetic and skilled individuals who have enriched our province. As Alberta looks forward to its second century, immigration will continue to be vital to our province's economic, social and cultural fabric.

[1] Appendix 1 identifies the services various Government of Alberta departments currently provide to immigrants.
[2] Appendix 2 contains charts with detailed statistics on immigrants to Alberta.

Immigrants come to Alberta for many reasons – work, family and refuge
Immigrants to Alberta enter Canada through one of three basic categories. Of the 16,469 immigrants to Alberta in 2004, a little over half (8,752 immigrants) entered through the independent class. The independent class includes mostly skilled workers (and their dependents) who are selected on the basis of the knowledge, skills and experience deemed necessary and appropriate for Canada's labour market. The independent class also includes investors, entrepreneurs, and self-employed immigrants. Another 5,346 immigrants were sponsored by close family members. The remaining 13% of immigrants were the 2,210 individuals admitted for humanitarian reasons as part of Canada's refugee program. The labour force participation rate of working age immigrants, both with and without post-secondary credentials, is similar to that of other working age Albertans, at around 70%.[ii]

Immigrants come to Alberta from various countries
In 1996, the top two source areas for immigrants to Alberta were the United Kingdom (15.2%) and Other European countries (15.2%).[iii] In 2004, by contrast, the top four source countries for immigration to Alberta were China, the Philippines, India and Pakistan. African immigrants have also increased in number in the last 10 years.[iv] These changes have unique impacts on the cultural, language, and community supports required in Alberta.

65% of immigrants 20 years of age and older arrive with a post-secondary credential[v]
The immigration requirements of many countries, including Canada, favour immigrants with a post-secondary credential.[3] While refugees are admitted to Canada for humanitarian reasons, one in four also have a university degree or trade/vocational training from their home country.

In 2004, over 9,000 international students received study permits for Alberta[vi]
International students provide significant cultural, social and economic benefits to the institutions and communities where they study and live. In addition, they contribute their skills and knowledge to enhance our innovation and international competitiveness. As Alberta looks to address shortages of skilled labour, attraction initiatives can target international students. They have spent time in Alberta and are precisely the people we are most able to, and want to, attract.

III. Building the Case for a Coordinated Immigration Strategy

Over the past 20 years, Alberta's economy has grown at an average annual rate of 3.7%[vii]
Alberta is enjoying the strongest economic growth of any province in Canada.[viii] To sustain this growth, Alberta requires an adequate supply of workers with the right knowledge and skills. Albertans' standard of living and future opportunities for economic success should not be jeopardized by a lack of skilled workers.

Alberta will have a shortage of 100,000 workers over the next ten years[ix]
Alberta is facing a number of demographic challenges – an aging population, low birthrate, urbanization, and decreased interprovincial migration – all of which will affect our ability to meet the labour force demands of a prosperous economy.

[3] A post-secondary credential, which can be a college diploma or certificate, trade certificate, or university degree.

Unemployment rates below 3% are a key indicator of a very tight labour market. Alberta's unemployment rate fell to a 24-year low of 3.4% in June 2005.[xii] As a result, employers are having difficulty in finding people to fill various job openings. Shortages are especially severe in health care, information and communications technology, construction, agriculture, food processing and tourism/hospitality.[xiii]

The situation will become even more critical over the next decade. Human Resources and Employment forecasts over 400,000 new jobs will be created in Alberta between 2004 and 2014. At the same time, it is anticipated that only 300,000 new workers will enter the labour market.[xiv]

Fast facts:

- Independent-class immigrants who came as entrepreneurs invested over $10 M in 2002 and contributed over 200 full- and part-time jobs in Alberta.[x]
- Immigrants provide essential linkages between provincial and international economies. Estimates show that a 10% increase in immigration is correlated with a 1% increase in exports.[xi]

Small- and large-scale projects are at risk if we do not find enough people to fill this shortage

There are currently $107 billion worth of capital projects planned or underway in this province.[xv] If Alberta does not attract enough people with the knowledge and skills to fill our labour shortages, many of these projects will have to be delayed or abandoned. This would damage Alberta's international reputation and impair efforts to promote further investment.

Immigrants alone cannot solve labour shortages, but they must be part of the solution

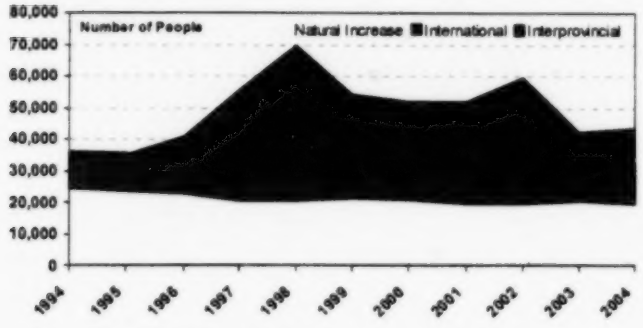
The Government of Alberta's labour supply strategy, which has been in place since 2001, has a three-pronged approach to addressing Alberta's labour needs:

- *Increase the skill and knowledge levels of Albertans to meet labour market demand.* Alberta has the highest participation rate in Canada.[xvi] This reflects the continuing efforts of the Government of Alberta and its community and industry partners to use the skills, talents and knowledge of our existing population. However, even if the labour force participation rates of all working age Aboriginal people and persons with disabilities, for example, were to increase to the average Alberta participation rate of about 70%, there would still be a shortfall of workers in this province.[xvii]

- *Increase the mobility of labour within Canada.* After peaking in the late 1990s, migration to Alberta from other provinces has decreased as a component of Alberta's population growth, as the charts on the next page and in Appendix 3 illustrate. The mobility of labour is directly impacted by the strength of other provincial economies. Based on past experience, the strong economic growth occurring in British Columbia and Ontario is expected to limit the number of skilled workers choosing to relocate to Alberta in the future.

- *Increase the number of immigrants to Alberta.* Until now, this third prong of the labour supply strategy has not been the focus of the Government of Alberta's efforts. However, there is growing consensus among employers and other stakeholders that Alberta needs to attract a larger share of the immigrants who are admitted to Canada and ensure they can use their skills and abilities to their greatest potential. While immigrants have and will continue to enrich life in Alberta in many other ways, besides contributing to economic growth, it is this shortage in the skilled labour force that is driving the immediate need for attracting and retaining more immigrants.

Components of Alberta Population Growth, 1994 -2004



Source: Alberta Finance, Statistics Canada

IV. Challenges to Address

A coordinated immigration policy framework must address two key issues – attracting immigrants to Alberta and retaining them. By definition, immigrants are highly mobile and will seek opportunities elsewhere if they are unable to work or participate fully in community life. Attraction and retention can be broken down into the following four broad challenges:

1. Increased competition for skilled immigrants

The United Nations predicts a decline in international migration based on improved living conditions and employment opportunities in traditional source countries such as China and India.

At the same time, there is increasing competition for immigrants. Even within Canada, Manitoba is using the Provincial Nominee Program as an active recruitment tool, while British Columbia, Nova Scotia and Ontario have developed initiatives to attract and retain more immigrants. There are many jurisdictions that share the urgent need for more skilled workers. Alberta will have to clearly differentiate itself if it is to be seen as a destination of choice for newcomers looking for an opportunity to contribute to a new home and build a new life.

While refugees have their destinations assigned to them by the federal government, all other immigrants are able to choose their destination. Studies find that the most important reason for choosing a particular location in which to settle is because family or friends are living there.[xviii] Fifty-nine percent of immigrants surveyed by Statistics Canada gave this reason. The next major reasons for choosing a particular location are educational opportunities and job prospects.[xix] People seek locations that offer better opportunities for education and employment, for themselves and their children. Alberta's companies and communities, both urban and rural, need to consider these factors as they develop initiatives to attract more immigrants.

2. Under-utilization of immigrant skills

The Government of Alberta and its community and industry partners need to work together to enhance the ability of immigrants to participate in the labour force. Despite their skills,

their education and their willingness to work, many immigrants in Alberta continue to face barriers to employment. These barriers include a lack of consistent, transparent processes for the recognition of foreign credentials and skills acquired abroad, a lack of Canadian work experience, and gaps in the language and technical skills required for employment in Alberta.

According to two studies using different methodologies, under-utilization of immigrants' skills creates an opportunity cost for the Canadian economy that amounts to $2 billion annually.[xx]

3. Supports for families

Integration services provide information, assistance and language training for immigrants and their families, with the aim of allowing people of all ages and all cultural and linguistic backgrounds to successfully participate in their community. These services are critical to improving Alberta's retention rate – the percentage of immigrants who remain in Alberta after initially landing here. Research shows that Alberta's approximate retention rate is between 70 and 75%, while in Ontario and British Columbia it is over 90%.[xxi] If skilled immigrants and their families are unable to participate meaningfully in the community, they will seek opportunities elsewhere.

Existing integration services are helping immigrants and their families make new lives in Alberta. Nevertheless, immigrants to Alberta have identified gaps, including:

- Insufficient English fluency, not only among those immigrants who are intending to work, but also among those who are not, such as children in the kindergarten to Grade 12 system, grandparents, and relatives who cannot work due to health issues or disabilities.
- Finding complete and correct information about the community to which they are moving before they move there
- Lack of understanding about Canadian culture.
- Resolving personal health issues in a health care system with which they are unfamiliar.

The Government of Alberta and its community partners therefore need to work together to improve settlement services for immigrants and their families.

4. Public attitudes towards immigration

Communities and workplaces need support as they work towards achieving their goals for welcoming an increased number of immigrants and their families.

Ethnic and cultural diversity already exists in Alberta's communities. Attitudes about this diversity are developed within the contexts of family, friends, school and work, and in the broader community. Most Albertans respect diversity, but a recent report from the Canada West Foundation identified "perceived negative attitudes towards immigrants in the province".[xxii] To help address this, the Government of Alberta can support community initiatives that foster greater acceptance of immigrants and a better understanding of their contributions.

In Alberta it is recognized "as a fundamental principle and as a matter of public policy that all Albertans should share in an awareness and appreciation of the diverse racial and cultural composition of society and that the richness of life in Alberta is enhanced by sharing that diversity."[xxiii]

V. Building on Existing Directions

- With the release of the *20-year Strategic Plan* in the 2004 budget, the Alberta government made a commitment to "take steps to attract skilled workers from outside the province." The *20-year Strategic Plan* also states that Government needs to assist professional regulatory bodies and employers with recognizing the full value of immigrants' professional qualifications and work experience.

- In 2004, the Government of Alberta developed *Securing Tomorrow's Prosperity*, an economic strategy that, among other objectives, identifies the need to "Improve ability to educate, develop, attract and retain knowledge workers."

- In 2004, the Government of Alberta developed a *Strategy for Integrating Skilled Immigrants into the Alberta Economy*. During that consultation, the need for increased coordination of government services was identified, and specific strategies and actions for the future were identified.

- In 2005, the Government of Alberta developed the *Rural Alberta Policy Framework*. Strategy 32 is to "Work with rural communities to enhance their ability to attract and retain professionals, entrepreneurs, and people who are new to Canada and new to Alberta."

VI. Strategies for Action

This strategic policy framework requires coordinated policy and program responses from a number of Ministries, as immigration issues are interlinked with human resources, settlement services, education, health, economic development, and housing. In order to attract and retain more immigrants to Alberta, this strategy focuses on the following four key strategic directions:

1. Welcoming communities. Support communities as they work towards achieving their goals for welcoming and being inclusive of immigrants and their families.

2. Attracting immigrants to Alberta. Increase the number of immigrants accepted to Canada who choose to live in Alberta.

3. Living in Alberta. Expand the programs and services that integrate immigrants and their families into daily life, so they can successfully live, work and learn in Alberta.

4. Working in Alberta. Help immigrants access labour market opportunities.

New strategies under each of these four key directions have been recommended. The list of strategies is intended to be illustrative and not exhaustive.

1. Welcoming communities

Objective: Immigrants have the opportunity to participate fully in the social, cultural and economic life of the province, without discrimination.

- Develop resources and programs that increase Albertans' awareness, understanding and appreciation of human rights, multiculturalism, and diversity, and that remove barriers to full participation by immigrants.
- Assist communities and workplaces in assessing their readiness to accept increased numbers of immigrants.
- Expand the support provided to organizations for developing the capacity they need to help build communities and workplaces that are fair and inclusive, respect human rights, and welcome immigrants from diverse cultures and religious traditions.
- Work with post-secondary institutions to strengthen their expertise in designing and delivering quality international student programs and programs for learners with English as an additional language, through selected research and professional development events.

2. Attracting immigrants to Alberta

Objective: The proportion of Canadian immigrants landing in Alberta increases to 10%, resulting in a minimum of 24,000 immigrants to Alberta per year (compared to a total of 16,469 immigrants to Alberta in 2004).

- Develop a permanent federal-provincial agreement on the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) that has more flexibility and increases the number of nominees to meet employer demand.
- Expand the promotion of the Provincial Nominee Program to Alberta employers.
- Increase the number of economic immigrants coming to Alberta through targeted international marketing strategies.
- Develop a coordinated marketing strategy to increase awareness about Alberta and position the province as a preferred destination for immigrants.
- Work with urban and rural municipalities to develop attraction initiatives.
- Develop a comprehensive "Immigrate to Alberta" website to provide a single-window access point for information for immigrants, including evaluations of international credentials. Link the "Immigrate to Alberta" website to the federal government's proposed "Going to Canada" portal.
- Encourage the federal government to reduce the processing time for immigrants to Canada, allowing Canada and Alberta to be more competitive in attracting highly skilled workers.
- Promote private and group refugee sponsorships in communities interested in aiding those in need of protection.

Objective: A strategy is developed to facilitate permanent residency for international students completing studies in Alberta who want to remain permanently in the province.

- Develop a comprehensive "Study in Alberta" website that promotes Alberta, the learning systems, and the opportunities to study, live and work in the province and link it to the proposed "Immigrate to Alberta" website.
- Reach an agreement with the federal government to allow international students to work off campus while studying, to increase the attraction of living and working in Alberta.
- Examine options for, and the implications of, implementing a fast-track process to allow international students who have graduated from an Alberta post-secondary institution to obtain permanent resident status.
- Initiate negotiations for an agreement with the federal government to make the application for work permits for international students more flexible, allowing graduates to work immediately after finding employment.

3. Living in Alberta

Objectives: Immigrants receive the community supports necessary to successfully settle in and adapt to Alberta society.

The retention rate in Alberta – the percentage of immigrants who remain in Alberta after initially landing here – increases to 85%.

- Increase the capacity of settlement services and language training programs to meet increasing demand in primary destination cities (e.g., Calgary, Edmonton).
- Increase access to English as a second language (ESL), build settlement services capacity and increase access to literacy programming to adult immigrants in Alberta's smaller centres and rural areas.
- Build upon existing services to develop a continuum of language training programs that have the flexibility to meet the diverse needs of various immigrants – skilled immigrants, unskilled immigrants, school children, older persons, etc.
- Expand childcare services at language schools so immigrant families can access these programs.
- Examine ways to make Government of Alberta publications and other communication sources more linguistically and culturally sensitive.
- Build cross-cultural competency throughout the public service so that services provided to the public (e.g., health care, education, etc.) are accessible to immigrants.
- Encourage the Parent Link Centres to support immigrant families, where appropriate.

- Build on the existing efforts of health delivery programs to address the specific health needs, including mental health needs, of immigrants.
- Include a link to Alberta Seniors and Community Supports' information on housing programs on the "Immigrate to Alberta" website.

4. Working in Alberta

Objective: Immigrants' qualifications and skills gained outside Alberta are recognized and utilized.

- Expand efforts to work with regulatory bodies to develop innovative assessment frameworks that recognize foreign credentials as well as skills and work experience gained abroad, reducing the time required to complete the assessment.
- Work with post-secondary institutions and others to develop new, effective approaches to address identified gaps in immigrant skills and knowledge.
- Expand current activities (as listed in Appendix I) to attract, license and retain doctors, pharmacists, nurses and other health care professionals.

Objective: Alberta employers are able to benefit from immigration as one way to address skills shortages.

- Expand the delivery of the Foreign Worker Readiness Seminars to provide employers and communities throughout the province with the knowledge and tools required to attract and retain workers trained abroad.
- Work more closely with employers to increase their understanding of internationally acquired skills and work experience and to support a strategy of diversity in meeting their need for skilled workers (e.g., through wider circulation of publications such as *Diversity: A Strategy to meet your need for skilled workers*).
- Develop a data repository on international credentials that can be accessed online by employers, educational institutions and professional licensing bodies who need information about how an educational credit from another country compares to educational standards in Alberta.
- Develop a one-stop centre for employers to get information on provincial programs and services that support the hiring and retention of immigrants (e.g., workplace diversity workshops, the data repository on international credentials, etc.).
- Encourage the federal government to address delays in processing work permit applications for international students who have graduated from a Canadian post-secondary institution.

VII. Conclusion

The Government of Alberta has adopted three basic strategies to meet labour force needs now and in the future:

1. Increase the skill and knowledge levels of Albertans.
2. Facilitate the mobility of labour in Canada.
3. Increase the number of immigrants to Alberta.

This policy framework outlines initial directions and strategies that focus on the third strategy, by developing a more coordinated and active Alberta government policy and program approach to immigrants and immigration. The challenge for the Government of Alberta and its partners will be to implement these strategies and build on them, in meeting the evolving needs of workplaces and communities in Alberta.

A more coordinated long-term policy and program approach to immigrants and immigration is critical to meeting dynamic labour force demands as our province continues to grow. It is also essential for ensuring that Alberta and its citizens, new and old, are able to enjoy a superior quality of life and remain confident about the future for themselves and their children.

Appendix I: Highlights of Current Activities

Under the Constitution, immigration is a concurrent jurisdiction between the federal, provincial and territorial governments. The Government of Canada is solely responsible for the final selection and admission of immigrants to Canada, as well as for the final selection and admission of temporary residents such as temporary foreign workers, live-in caregivers and international students. As part of this mandate, the federal government is responsible for the provision of information to prospective immigrants before they arrive in Canada. The federal government also provides limited language training to immigrants through the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program and funds some settlement services through the Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program (ISAP) and the Host program. The Alberta government, with the federal government, co-funds settlement services for immigrants under the Integrated Services Program agreement.

The following charts identify current primary Government of Alberta activities, which have been assigned under each of the four proposed policy directions. This is not an exhaustive list. For example, it does not capture the services the Government of Alberta provides to all Albertans, including immigrants, such as health care and education.

Lead Department	Action
Welcoming communities	
Community Development	The Human Rights, Citizenship and Multicultural Education Fund, supports educational initiatives that help foster equality and fairness and encourage the inclusion of all Albertans in economic, social and cultural activities.
Community Development	The Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission helps Albertans resolve complaints of discrimination in the workplace and in several other areas, such as tenancy and services available to the public.
Government of Alberta	Supports ethno-cultural communities by: - Accepting family class immigrants, thus enabling families to stay together. - Accepting refugee class immigrants, thus building the size of ethno-cultural communities. - Supporting bilingual programs. - Supporting cultural heritage facilities such as ethno-cultural halls, museums and archives. - Providing grants for ethno-cultural groups such as choirs and dance troupes. - Providing grants for cultural events.

Lead Department	Action
Attracting immigrants to Alberta	
Economic Development	Administers the Alberta Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) set up by the federal government and the Government of Alberta. In Alberta, the PNP expedites the immigration process for skilled workers, in occupations designated as critical to the Alberta economy. Begun in March 2002, the PNP was extended to March 2006 and expanded from 400 to 1200 provincial nominee foreign workers due in part to employer demand. www.alberta-canada.com/pnp.
Economic Development	Strives to attract economic immigrants (skilled workers, business immigrants) to Alberta through its federal immigration program.
Economic Development and Innovation and Science	Coordinate initiatives to attract non-Canadian foreign workers and Canadian high technology workers employed in California to Alberta.
Economic Development	Promoted Alberta as a destination for potential skilled worker immigrants during missions to United Kingdom, France and Germany.
Advanced Education	Administers the *Canada-Alberta Agreement on Post-Graduation Employment for Foreign Students* (October 2003), which allows for longer working opportunities for foreign students employed by an Alberta employer. www.learning.gov.ab.ca/news/2003/October/nr-SkilledImmigrants.asp.
Advanced Education, Human Resources and Employment, and International and Intergovernmental Relations	Developing a memorandum of understanding with Citizenship and Immigration Canada to enable international students to work off-campus.
Advanced Education and Education	Participates on Citizenship and Immigration Canada's Advisory Committee on International Students and Immigration.
Advanced Education and Education	As part of the international education strategy promotes opportunities to study, live and work in Alberta through developing and distributing a range of marketing materials and participating in key international missions and outreach activities.

Lead Department	Action
Living in Alberta	
Human Resources and Employment	Through the Integrated Services Program (ISP) co-funds, with the federal government, the non-governmental providers of settlement services, including information, orientation, interpretation/translation, and referral services to new Albertans through contracts with a network of immigrant-serving agencies.
Human Resources and Employment, Education and Advanced Education	Have developed a continuum of language training options to meet the diverse needs of immigrants providing English as a Second Language (ESL) programs across Alberta. Human Resources and Employment expects to spend about $20 million on ESL training this year, which benefits both those immigrants who intend to work and those who do not intend to work.

Human Resources and Employment	Prepares and distributes the print and web-based publication *Welcome to Alberta*, which provides valuable settlement information for skilled immigrants coming to Alberta.
Human Resources and Employment	In Edmonton and Calgary, HRE funds Language Assessment and Referral Centres where adult immigrants can have their English language skills assessed and to find information about available classes.

Lead Department	Action
Working in Alberta	
Advanced Education	Through the International Qualifications Assessment Service (IQAS) assesses educational credentials from another country and issues certificates that indicate how the credentials compare to Alberta standards. IQAS assessment certificates are used by over 24 post-secondary institutions and 39 professional licensing bodies. In 2004, 3,200 assessment certificates were issued.
Advanced Education	Through Apprenticeship and Industry Training, assesses international credentials and formal training (certificates, work experience and training in the trades) to provide individuals with an opportunity to become certified Alberta tradespeople or to establish advanced standing in apprenticeship programs. Alberta is also a participant in the Interprovincial Standards (Red Seal) Program that allows qualified trades people to practice in any province or territory where the trade is designated.
Advanced Education	Funds a number of profession/occupation-specific pilot bridging programs in public post-secondary institutions (e.g., Clinical Communication Skills for International Medical Graduates and Nurse Credentialing for Internationally Educated Nurses).
Human Resources and Employment	Has contracts with regional agencies that provide employment services specifically for immigrants and invests over $4 million each year on programs to help immigrants receive work experience, skills upgrading and employment-related language training. Funds more than 20 programs that help immigrants succeed in the workforce. For example: • A rig hand training program, run in conjunction with the Petroleum Institute Training Services trained 30 immigrants. 93 per cent are now employed. • A millwright program for 14 new Canadians resulted in 90 per cent getting jobs. • Funds programs to help immigrants who are foreign trained professionals get jobs in their field of training. Between June 2003 and February 2005, over 800 foreign trained immigrants used this service.
Human Resources and Employment	Has been developing policy and program responses to facilitate the recognition of the qualifications and skills of foreign trained immigrants in Alberta.
Human Resources and Employment	Develops and distributes information for employers on best practice, to assist them with recruiting and retaining skilled immigrants. For example, HRE publishes *Diversity: A strategy to meet your need for skilled workers*.
Human Resources and Employment	Publishes *Working in Alberta: A guide for internationally trained and educated immigrants*. ESL instructors, career counsellors and trainers in occupational skills programs currently adapt existing publications to the language and literacy levels of unskilled immigrant clients.
Human Resources and Employment	Administers the Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS) website, which provides accurate and current information on occupations, labour market forecasts, and job opportunities. ALIS includes *CERTinfo: Certification and Registration Requirements for*

	Employment in Alberta, a new resource to assist both prospective immigrants and people already in Alberta to utilize their skills in the Alberta labour market. www.alis.gov.ab.ca/certinfo.
Human Resources and Employment	Chairs an interdepartmental working group for the continuing coordination and monitoring of the implementation of this framework's goals.
Health and Wellness	Directly funds and supports immigration related initiatives that assess and integrate health care workers from other countries through the Provincial Nominee Program and other Ministry sponsored programs. Examples of the latter include: • The Alberta International Medical Graduate (AIMG) program at the University of Calgary and University of Alberta schools of medicine facilitates the entry of IMGs living in Alberta into family medicine and specialty residency programs. • Part V of the *Special Register* allows IMGs restricted licenses to work in areas of Alberta designated as having an emergency need for a physician by the Minister of Health and Wellness. • The IMG Clinical Preceptorship Initiative funded by the Ministry and delivered through Capital Health provides international medical graduates with restricted licensing. • The IMG Surgical Assistant Program funded by the Ministry and delivered through Capital Health will provide international medical graduates with restricted licensing. • The International Pharmacy Graduate (IPG) Program initiative funded by the Ministry and delivered by the Alberta College of Pharmacists will provide international pharmacy graduates with fully licensed practice opportunities. • Senior departmental officials are members of the steering committee for the Federal/Provincial Western Alliance for Assessment of International Physicians Initiative.
Economic Development	Leads in marketing Alberta to potential economic immigrants as a prime location in which to live, work and do business.
Economic Development	Delivers the Foreign Worker Readiness seminars.
Economic Development	Leads the *Provincial Nominee Program*.

Appendix II: Facts about Immigration to Alberta

Top 10 Source Countries for Immigrants, 2004[xxiv]

	2004	
Country	**Number**	**%**
China	2,195	13.3
Philippines	1,969	12.0
India	1,629	9.9
Pakistan	1,098	6.7
United Kingdom and Colonies	879	5.3
United States	700	4.3
Sudan	428	2.6
Republic of Korea	368	2.2
Colombia	328	2.0
Russia	322	2.0
Subtotal	9,916	60.2
Others	6,553	39.8

Settlement of Immigrants in Alberta, 2004[xxv]

	2004	
City	**Number**	**%**
Calgary	9,308	56.5
Edmonton	4,810	29.2
Subtotal	14,118	85.7
Red Deer	254	1.5
Lethbridge	177	1.1
Medicine Hat	146	0.9
Fort McMurray	128	0.8
Brooks	83	0.5
Grande Prairie	126	0.8
Sherwood Park	72	0.4
Banff	54	0.3
Subtotal	15,158	92.0
Other	1,311	8.0

Immigrants to Alberta, 20+ Years of Age, by Selected Educational Level, 2001-2004[xxvi]

Year	2001		2002		2003		2004	
Class	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**%**
0 - 9 Years	1,541	13.4	1,523	14.3	1,631	14.1	1,376	11.7
10 - 12 Years	1,687	14.7	1,608	15.1	1,730	15.0	1,711	14.6
13 or more years of schooling	1,003	8.7	950	9.0	1,109	9.6	1,018	8.7
Sub-total (no post-secondary completed)	4,230	36.8	4,080	38.4	4,470	38.6	4,105	35.0
Trade Certificate	613	5.3	534	5.0	559	4.8	614	5.2
Non-University Diploma	1,252	10.9	1,089	10.3	1,344	11.6	1,328	11.3
Bachelor's Degree	4,145	36.0	3,710	34.9	4,041	34.9	4,136	35.0
Master's Degree	1,013	8.8	991	9.3	973	8.4	1,275	10.9
Doctorate	252	2.2	218	2.1	182	1.6	252	2.1
Sub-total (post-secondary completed)	7,276	63.2	6,541	61.6	7,099	61.4	7,632	65.0

Immigration to Alberta by Landing Class, 2001-2004[xxvii]

Year	2001		2002		2003		2004	
Class	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**%**
Independent[4]	9,565	58.3	7,989	54.1	7,847	49.6	8,752	53.1
Family[5]	4,970	30.3	4,965	33.6	5,916	37.4	5,346	32.5
Refugee	1,874	11.4	1,792	12.1	1,979	12.5	2,210	13.4
Other	0	0.0	9	0.1	92	0.6	161	1.0

[4] Independent class immigrants include skilled workers (around 65% of all immigrants and the majority of independent immigrants), investors (around 2% of all immigrants), entrepreneurs (around 2% of all immigrants), self-employed (around 1% of all immigrants), and Provincial Nominees (less than 1% of all immigrants).

[5] Family class immigrants are sponsored by relatives who are already in Canada.

Appendix III: Alberta Interprovincial and International Migration

This chart illustrates that the labour market in Alberta is getting tighter, as indicated by the red line (unemployment rates). However, we cannot rely on interprovincial migration to solve this issue, as interprovincial migration rates are going down. Increasingly Alberta will have to look to immigrants from other countries to resolve the labour shortage issue.

Source: Statistics Canada

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